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New York

President:	Mrs. Haley	(United States of America)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Italy	Mr. Lambertini
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Rakhmetullin
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zagaynov
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Kyslytsya/ Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

genda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Human rights and prevention of armed conflict

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Human rights and prevention of armed conflict

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, and thank him for taking the time to be here.

The Secretary-General: I thank the United States presidency for convening today's important meeting.

We are all aware that large-scale human rights violations cause terrible suffering and undermine prospects for sustainable peace and reconciliation. Healing these wounds is always a difficult and painful process, yet that responsibility grows with each new instance of mass killings or mass displacement, and sexual violence.

Prevention is an essential means of reducing human suffering, building stable and prosperous societies, and enabling people to reach their full potential — and upholding human rights is a crucial element in prevention. International cooperation for prevention, and particularly for translating early warning into early action, depends on trust between Member States and in their relations with the United Nations.

The Security Council has a major role to play. Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations is clear that the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security rests with the Council "[i]n order to ensure prompt and effective action". I address the Council in that spirit. The issue today is not that human rights violations undermine every aspect of our shared values and common work, but rather how the United Nations responds.

(*spoke in French*)

I would like to draw the Council's attention to three points in order to better focus our discussion:

First, the quest for peace is what should guide us along a continuum from prevention and conflict resolution to peacebuilding and sustainable development. Peace is a tireless undertaking, to which all United Nations agencies and bodies must work, in accordance with their mandates and responsibilities.

Secondly, peace, security, human rights and sustainable development are mutually reinforcing. The Charter of the United Nations, which we are all dutybound to defend, has played a fundamental role in that regard in that it links these three pillars. When the United Nations tries to deal with them in isolation, it often fails in the mission entrusted to it by Member States and peoples. Several reform processes have shown that the fragmentation of our action is one of our major weaknesses. Together, we must return to the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations to prevent armed conflicts and achieve a lasting peace for development. Hence the need to effectively protect all human, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

Thirdly, the United Nations must consider human rights in a coherent and rational manner. It is the primary responsibility of Member States to integrate the promotion and protection of human rights into their national policies. But close cooperation between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and all relevant bodies of the United Nations, including the Security Council, enhances the general awareness of potential crisis situations and our collective capacity to address them. Member States expect the Secretariat to present appropriate information and options, while respecting the mandates and the principle of independence. I am ready to promote a more confident relationship and improve communication with the Council emphasising coherence, frankness and transparency.

Human rights are intrinsically linked to peace and security, and their inclusion in the deliberations and decisions of the Security Council is of great importance. The unity of the Council is crucial in order to effectively address the most flagrant violations of human rights, and in particular to prevent mass atrocities. I call on the Council to spare no effort to put an end to the intolerable sufferings of the Syrian people. Failure in that task would be a tragedy to shame us all.

(*spoke in English*)

There is growing awareness of the ways in which rights violations signal threats to security and how rights upheld can contribute to peace. Recent experience offers many examples. United Nations peace operations

have been progressively authorized with robust human rights and protection of civilians mandates. Indeed, 15 Security Council-mandated peace operations include a human rights element. Systematic monitoring and reporting of human rights violations has given a voice to victims and advanced the fight against impunity. Moreover, these efforts offer important warning signals to societies that also highlight the Council's determination to prevent further abuses. To advance this work, I encourage close cooperation with my Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide.

Human rights work contributes to missions' efforts to protect civilians under threat, and the missions' engagement with host States on human rights issues has helped build capacities and even, in some circumstances, preserve democratic space. The Council has also taken decisive action to prosecute alleged perpetrators of the most brutal crimes by establishing the international criminal tribunals for Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere, and by referring cases to the International Criminal Court. Accountability for such crimes is an important element in achieving reconciliation, and over the longer term building resilient societies and judicial institutions.

Other key initiatives of the Council include advancing the protection of children in armed conflict and action against sexual-based violence in armed conflict. The Council has also put the human rights of women and children high on its agenda as a valuable input to its peace efforts. I remain deeply committed to that agenda and will spare no efforts to step up the work and support of the Secretariat. Protecting young generations from conflict-situations is one of the best investments we can make towards achieving sustainable peace.

Despite all these efforts, millions of people still need to be protected from crises, and far more time and resources continue to be spent responding to crises than to preventing them. If we are to truly address today's challenges, we must make prevention our priority, tackle the root causes of conflict, help build and strengthen institutions, and react earlier and more effectively to address human rights concerns. That is the lesson learned from so many conflicts, and what I remain staunchly committed to that agenda.

Our world is facing unprecedented peace and security challenges that result from a lack of prevention and from insufficient implementation of human rights obligations, including social and economic rights. The consequences for people and States, and indeed for humankind, are being felt by tens of millions and by entire regions. Ensuring improved and less politicized action on human rights is a critical part of meeting this challenge, as is achieving urgent progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Allow me to suggest a theoretical test. If the most acute human rights and development concerns were immediately resolved, how many situations would still be threats to peace and security and remain on the Council's agenda? I have set in motion various reforms of the Secretariat that will enable us to play our role better, in keeping with the mandates and trust the Member States place in us. The resolutions on sustaining peace and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are cause for hope; progress on human rights aspects would further complement these advances.

In the months to come, I hope that Member States will engage through the General Assembly and the Security Council to support my reform proposals and strengthen them with their own.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his time, his leadership and his service on this issue.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States.

Thirty years ago, my predecessor, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, made the case that human rights have a special place in foreign policy. It had been just two years since the General Assembly had adopted its outragous resolution 3379 (XXX), equating Zionism with racism. Moynihan thought that tolerance and compassion could use a win at the United Nations and, as usual, he was right.

The first argument he offered for paying greater attention to this subject was that human rights are inalienable rights. When we embrace human rights, we embrace the values that are held, among others, by all the world's major religions. Indeed, one of the purposes of the United Nations is, according to the Charter, "respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or relgion". Ambassador Moynihan did not stop with arguing that protecting human rights is the right thing to do. He also argued that it is the smart thing to do — and it is.

Despite his advice in the 1970s, the Council has never held a meeting focused exclusively on human rights. Today, we will do that. We have held meetings devoted to specific situations in specific countries, but we have never dedicated a meeting to the broader question of how human rights violations and abuses can lead to a breakdown in peace and security. The traditional view has been that the Security Council is for maintaining international peace and security, not for human rights.

I am here today to assert that the protection of human rights is often deeply intertwined with peace and security. The two things often cannot be separated. In case after case, human rights violations and abuses are not merely the incidental by-products of conflict, but the trigger of conflict. When a State begins to systematically violate human rights, it is a sign; it is a red flag; it is a blaring siren — one of the clearest possible indicators that instability and violence may follow and spill across borders. It is no surprise that the world's most brutal regimes are also the most ruthless violators of human rights.

Let us consider North Korea. Systematic human rights violations help underwrite the country's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. The Government forces many of its citizens, including political prisoners, to work in life-threatening conditions in coal mines and other dangerous industries to finance the regime's military. Because they do, the Security Council must devote considerable efforts to addressing North Korea's increasing threats to international peace.

Turning to Syria, in 2011, a group of boys between the ages of 12 and 15 years spray-painted the following message on the wall of their school: "The people want the fall of the regime." For that, the Syrian regime arrested them. Those children were brutally beaten, had their fingernails ripped out by grown men in Government prisons and were tortured before being returned to their parents. The outrage spawned more protests and more crackdowns, and the cycle repeated until the situation turned into a full-fledged war. It was not just any war, but one that has caused hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions of refugees.

What began with assorted human rights violations and abuses that the Council has been reluctant to address has become a security issue that we are forced to address repeatedly. It is a prime example of why we should take human rights violations and abuses more serious from their beginning.

In other cases, Governments use violence and human rights violations to stifle dissent. We have seen numerous instances in which the Burundian Government services have used torture to crackdown on protesters. That has forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee to neighbouring countries and caused massive regional disruption. It is little wonder that the Government has pushed back on the United Nations and the African Union's work in Burundi.

We continue to watch Burma, where the security forces have allegedly conducted episodic acts of violence and repression against the ethnic Rohingya people, who already face widespread ethnic and religious discrimination from Governmental authorities and popular social movements, despite the human rights gains achieved throughout the country as a result of Burma's ongoing democratic transformation. Such treatment drives desperate people to flee to neighbouring countries at best, or to radicalization at worst.

Such allegations demand real and independent investigations as soon as possible. That is why we supported the recent establishment of an international fact-finding mission to look into these allegations. Frankly, there is hardly an issue on our agenda today that does not involve concerns about human rights, and future threats will continue to challenge us. That kind of violence is not inevitable, but if the Council fails to take human rights violations and abuses seriously, they can escalate into real threats to international peace and security. The Security Council cannot continue to be silent when it sees widespread violations of human rights. Why would we tell ourselves that we will only deal with questions of peace and security without addressing the factors that bring about the threats in the first place?

We should be ready to engage early and often in the statements that we make and in the measures that we impose. It is clear that the connection between human rights and security is a topic worthy of the Council's serious consideration. To be fair, over the years, the Security Council has addressed human rights issues in various ways. The Security Council has mandated many peacekeeping and political missions to monitor and report on human rights violations and abuses. Several Security Council-established sanctions regimes

include Syria's human rights violations or abuses as a criterion for adding individuals to travel-ban or assets-freeze lists. These are tangible and real impacts that show what the Council can achieve for human rights when we set our minds to it, but there is so much more that we can do.

The next international crisis could very well come from places in which human rights are widely disregarded. Perhaps, it will be North Korea, Iran or Cuba. We do not know where the next revolt against basic violations of humanity will come, but we know from history that they will come. When they do, the Security Council will be called upon to react. We are much better off acting on the front-end and standing for human rights before the absence of human rights forces us to react. It is past time for the Council to fulfil the mandate that it was given 72 years ago. It is past time that we dedicated ourselves to promoting peace, security and human rights.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the other members of the Council.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): We commend the United States for convening this meeting to consider the interlinkages between human rights and the prevention of armed conflicts.

More than 70 years ago, the Charter of the United Nations established the founding pillars of the United Nations system. Those are peace and security, human rights and free development. In today's globalized world, they are more topical than ever. Sustainable peace and security cannot be achieved in isolation from human rights. Human rights violations are not only a grave consequence of conflicts, but they are frequently the very reason that conflicts begin in the first place. In the past, we have seen rare instances in which the Security Council was able to establish that link between the danger of conflicts' eruption and human rights violations.

On 4 November 1956, the Security Council adopted resolution 120 (1956) on Hungary and the grave situation generated by the use of Soviet military forces to suppress the efforts of the Hungarian people to reassert their rights. The Council called an emergency special session of the General Assembly (see A/PV.564 to A/PV.573) so as to make the appropriate recommendations concerning the situation in Hungary. Remarkably, the Council's resolution could not be vetoed by the Soviet Union, which had voted against it. At that time, the Council succeeded in achieving a desired result by adopting the resolution through a procedural vote.

In contrast, the outbreak of the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 was utterly overlooked, and the Council did not heed the early signs of the impending tragedy. Almost a year before the genocide during the summer of 1993, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions depicted in great detail an alarming situation with genocide looming and stressed that "human rights must be the prime concern of any system for monitoring or implementing agreements" (*E/CN.4/1994/7/Add.1, para. 61*). However, the Council subsequently failed to respond to that warning until several months after the tragedy had already taken place.

Today, the whole world is observing the severe consequences of the crisis in Syria and the gross human rights violations committed by various parties, particularly the Syrian regime and its allies. Early warning signs of an imminent conflict were already very clear in 2011. However, the first draft resolution on the issue (S/2011/612) introduced by France, Germany, Portugal and the United Kingdom, with a prominent human rights component, was vetoed on 4 October 2011. Fast forward six years — there is immense human suffering with hundreds of thousands dead, millions displaced and not even a hint of a light at the end of the tunnel.

Here is a final stroke to complete this grim picture. Action by the Security Council on the matter is immobilized by what now has amounted to eight uses of the veto. We can no longer apply a piecemeal approach to the issue of such fundamental importance for maintaining peace and security. It is time to look anew at the role and place of human rights in the work of the Council and take action.

Ukraine has consistently promoted the Human Rights Council resolution 24/16 on the role of prevention in ensuring and protecting human rights. Although the Human Rights Council is a designated United Nations venue for discussions on human rights issues, its ability to take practical and action-oriented decisions on matters relating to peace and security is obviously constrained. We must therefore recognize the

crucial implications that human rights violations have for peace and security, and it will be only natural for the Security Council to take the lead on this matter.

In 1992, following the end of the Cold War, the Council held its first summit meeting to discuss the responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security in all its aspects. At that time, the innate connection between the protection of human rights and the maintenance of peace and security appeared to be unquestionably understood and defended. Every Head of State or Government participating in the debate raised the issue of the Council's share of responsibility for, and role in the protection of, human rights.

At the summit, one world leader said:

> "I believe that these questions are not an internal matter of States, but rather their obligations under the United Nations Charter, international covenants and conventions. We want to see this approach become a universal norm. The Security Council is called upon to underscore the civilized world's collective responsibility for the protection of human rights and freedoms". (*S/PV.3046, p. 46*)

This would be a relatively banal quotation if not for the fact that those words, pronounced in this very Chamber, were those of the President of the Russian Federation. The speaker was President Yeltsin himself, and the meeting took place 25 years ago, on the last day of January 1992, the very first month of the Russian membership in the United Nations and in the Council. These words resonate to this day in their continued global relevance, just as they do in their irrelevance to the current political reality of the country in question.

In New York City, a street sign at the south-west corner of Third Avenue and 67th Street reads Sakharov-Bonner Corner, in honour of Mr. Sakharov and his wife, Yelena Bonner. The corner is down the block from the Russian — formerly Soviet — Mission to the United Nations. Already in 1995 it was Yelena Bonner, testifying before the United States Congress, who said that all democratic ideals proclaimed in this very Chamber by President Yeltsin had been betrayed by the military assault on Chechnya.

Ever since, Russia has been striking a different chord, to the effect that the Security Council, the highest world authority to address conflicts and other threats to peace and security, should not consider human rights issues. What is more, human rights phobia has been spreading like a metastatic cancer beyond the Council to other parts of the United Nations body in New York. In November and then in December last year, consideration of human rights resolutions was challenged by a group of countries in the Third Committee, which, by its mandate, is obliged to address such issues.

Disrespect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law by authoritarian regimes with regard to their own citizens is aimed, inter alia, at ensuring impunity for themselves for internal civil wars, as is the case in Syria, or unaccountability for attempts to illegally annex foreign territories, as is the case with Russia's actions in Crimea and its military aggression in Donbas.

Three years have passed since Russia illegally occupied Crimea. The occupying authorities are committing massive, systematic violations of human rights and seeking to destroy the identity of Ukrainians and of the indigenous people of the peninsula, the Crimean Tatars, as well as that of other ethnic and religious groups. In its resolution 71/205, adopted in December 2016, the General Assembly reaffirmed that Crimean residents should enjoy protection under the Geneva Conventions and applicable human rights instruments.

One can find ample testimony to the crimes committed during the Russian aggression against Ukraine in the reports of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine, which has been operating in my country for three years now, at the invitation of the Ukrainian Government. The request for the deployment of the mission was an immediate response by my Government to Russian aggression as an effort to prevent massive human rights violations. Since March 2014, the mission has issued 17 reports on the human rights situation and two thematic reports, including one on sexual violence in conflict in Ukraine.

Proper consideration of human rights violations in the context of the maintenance of peace and security may contribute to preventing the outbreak of armed conflict. If a conflict is already under way, addressing its human rights dimension may prevent the further escalation of violence and serve as a deterrent to conflict-related atrocities.

In the 1990s, the Security Council received 23 periodic reports on human rights violations in the

former Yugoslavia. The first peacekeeping operation in United Nations history with a mandate of protection of civilians was deployed to contribute to the resolution of the Balkan conflict. Therefore, we do not suggest anything new.

The human rights component should be an integral part of the Council's consideration of conflict resolution and management. When the Council looks into the issues of the occupation of Crimea and Russian military aggression in Ukrainian Donbas, the same approach should apply.

On the other side of the world, though still on the Russian border, there is another vivid case in point: the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The recent report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, presented in Geneva to the Human Rights Council, pointed to deficiencies in the public food-distribution system, restrictions on access to information, and violations of international labour standards concerning overseas workers. The report also expresses continuing concern over the grave situation in political prison camps and the unresolved cases of enforced disappearances, including the abduction of citizens of Japan and the Republic of Korea.

In the 1970s, human rights issues were removed from the agenda of New York and transferred to nice, cosy, sleepy Geneva. It was not only a physical move but, it appears, an ideological divorce of United Nations Headquarters from something that was then perceived as irreconcilably different from the security agenda of New York. It is time to reconcile these differences and to restore the integrity of the entire United Nations system as designed by its founders.

The Council has no right to repeat its failures in Rwanda, to continue to fail in Syria, or to remain paralysed by the Russian position in the case of Crimea and Donbas.

Of course, many things depend on the dedicated leadership of the United Nations — a leadership that would leave behind the years of apathy and neglect vis-à-vis the human rights dimension of security, and one that is fit to lead the Organization into a future in which human rights and human security are integral parts of the national security of each and every Member State.

To conclude, I would like to stress how much we are inspired by Secretary-General Guterres's vision and the approaches he has outlined to the issues suggested for discussion. We sincerely believe that the Secretary-General can skilfully manage all of the tools given him by the United Nations Charter and that he will not hesitate to use them whenever necessary to achieve the implementation of the Charter's goals and objectives.

Mr. Rakhmetullin (Kazakhstan): I thank you, Madam President, for convening today's meeting. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his remarks.

Our world is now facing turbulent times of instability, unpredictability and tensions. Multiplying conflicts interconnected with the threat of global terrorism and violent extremism, growing racism and xenophobia produce horrendous violations of human rights law and humanitarian law. We believe that these and other negative phenomena are consequences of the economic crisis, inequality, chronic poverty, illiteracy and unemployment, water and food insecurity, climate change, global competition and the imbalance in finance and trade. We therefore recognize that all three pillars of peace, development and human rights are inseparable and mutually reinforcing, as set out in resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262.

Kazakhstan fully supports the Secretary-General's efforts to rebalance our approach to peace and security, and to make prevention a priority. From the very beginning of independence, our country has been following a course that is in full harmony with that initiative. In his manifesto, entitled *The World. 21st Century*, President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan called on humankind to implement a strategy that will forever rid the world of the threat of war and eliminate the root causes of conflict. We also began to develop the 2045 global strategic initiative plan, which plans to launch by the United Nations centenary a new trend in global development, based on fair conditions, in which all nations have equal access to infrastructure, resources and markets. We must be equally aware that, in conflict prevention, all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural, are indivisible and interdependent. We must ensure equal attention is paid to all of them.

The rights to decent work and adequate standards of living, housing, food, water and sanitation, health and education are at the core of the 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development, which provides an ideal platform to demonstrate our commitment to human rights. We also need to invest in a sustainable world with basic services and protected human rights, by helping Member States to build capacity for more effective and accountable institutions, appropriate legislation, security and justice reform, by ending all impunity and by enhancing personnel competencies.

Human rights cannot be fostered in an environment of continuous military action. Human rights must be viewed through an impartial lens without double standards, and should not be used as a political tool. Indeed, the integrity and credibility of the Council will only be enhanced if it proceeds in a balanced and equitable manner with all Member States involved. We see that human rights are mentioned 15 times in the Charter of the United Nations, but not in Chapter VII, which implies that these rights cannot be forcibly imposed on States; rather they can be realized through diplomacy, mediation and inclusive dialogue.

We believe that the Human Rights Council, its mechanisms and procedures, as well as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, play a key role in monitoring the observance of the human rights situation in all countries and have the appropriate mandate and experience to contribute to conflict prevention at an early stage. The Secretary-General undoubtedly plays a key role in the prevention of conflict and can, at any time, use his power under Article 99 of the Charter to bring to the attention of the Security Council any issue that could threaten international peace and security. The role of his Special Representatives and Envoys is also significant. Protecting civilians, especially against violence and sexual abuse inflicted on women and children, is a priority for my country, and we support the inclusion of these themes in the Security Council resolutions. It is also significant for the Council to give due thought to this factor, while formulating mandates of peacekeeping operations. Our discussions with troop- and police-contributing countries, as well as pre-deployment training in human rights and gender sensitivity are steps in the right direction. Kazakhstan is fully committed to multilateral action to support all human rights and to achieve peaceful coexistence and mutual respect in a world without conflicts.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to thank you, Madam President, and your delegation for taking the initiative to hold this meeting. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing today. Our delegation stands ready to join and support him in his efforts to reform the Organization.

Freedom is the foundation essential to the full exercise of human rights. Freedom, understood in the broadest possible way, presupposes the ability of a person to choose their destiny. Choose their way of life. Choose their form of Government. Choose their leaders. Choose the person with whom they wish to share their life. Choose their religion. Choose to have a religion or not. Choose their education. Choose to procreate, and how to do so or not. Choose where to live. In short, choose their life. It is in that ability to choose that the rights of the person — human rights — as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966, are developed.

Even where there is complete freedom, it is still necessary to safely ensure the movement from mere statements to the full exercise of those rights. However, we can categorically assert that where there is no freedom, human rights are violated entirely. Where there is no freedom, there will always be tensions that can lead to violent changes and the outbreak of conflict. In that regard, we reiterate once again that it is the responsibility of Governments to guarantee and to promote the enjoyment of human rights by the inhabitants of their countries, whether they be residents or persons in transit.

Uruguay is committed to the promotion and protection of, and respect for human rights, as a fundamental basis for sustaining fundamental freedoms and democratic life in all nations. Therefore, it does not recognize limits or exclusivity with regard to the forums in which human rights may be discussed. Moreover, it therefore does not accept the excuse of sovereignty or domestic jurisdiction in efforts to prevent the examination of the human rights situation in Member States.

To borrow the words of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, "sovereignty is threatened when leaders responsible for crimes against humanity go unpunished, and a culture of impunity feeds future cycles of violent instability across whole regions."

Uruguay is of the view that ensuring the protection of all human rights and peace is a precondition for the

sustainable development of countries. As expressed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

> "Sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security; and peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development. The new Agenda recognizes the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice and that are based on respect for human rights... on effective rule of law and good governance at all levels and on transparent, effective and accountable institutions" (*General Assembly resolution 70/1, para. 35*).

The occurrence of violations and abuses of human rights certainly set the foundation for the emergence of conflicts. If we look for the root causes of the conflicts of today, in most cases we will find serious human rights violations. The systematic violation of human rights is inherent to conflicts, which, in turn, can threaten international peace and security.

Until now, the Council has generally reacted to such situations after the fact, once the events have already taken place. We therefore echo the words of the Secretary-General on the importance of emphasizing the prevention of conflicts, since we put so much energy and resources into dealing with those that arise rather than preventing their occurrence in the first place. In that context, we would like to mention the 13 June 2016 appeal in which a group of 69 countries, including Uruguay, demanded, through their missions in Geneva, that human rights be put at the heart of conflict prevention.

Today, the protection of human rights is part of the mandates of nine peacekeeping operations and five special political missions. In that regard, Uruguay believes that the human rights components in peace operations contribute to their effectiveness in achieving the purposes for which they were deployed. It is therefore appropriate that the Security Council should receive periodic reports on every situation, without exception, where there are serious human rights violations. The Council should give greater attention to signs, such as serious violations of human rights, that foreshadow the start or escalation of a conflict, because that is the only way it can take measures in time to prevent conflicts. The fact is that the sooner those signs are identified, the more time the Council will have to act in order to mitigate their possible consequences.

Lastly, we would like to emphasize the importance of the nexus in the cooperation and flow of information between the Security Council and the Human Rights Council through information procedures and mechanismsthat enable them to coordinate their actions within their respective mandates and develop the system's preventive capability. While they are clearly two independent organs with different functions, that should not be an obstacle to the importance of ensuring the complementarity of their work.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive briefing.

It has been 70 years since the United Nations was established and its Charter adopted, laying a firm foundation for international cooperation in the Organization's three main areas of work: the maintenance of international peace and security, development and the protection and promotion of human rights. The Charter of the United Nations is not merely a legally binding international instrument. It was the product of harrowing human experience in the wake of the Second World War. With that in mind, the international community set out a series of purposes, principles and basic rules that were ultimately enshrined in the Charter, which soon became the most important source of *jus cogens* and a rulebook for joint international action.

The Charter entrusted the Security Council with a mandate to address exclusively situations that represent a threat to international peace and security, while tasking other organs and entities, notably the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, with strengthening States' commitment to human rights and developing principles for addressing human rights situations in Member States. In that regard, Egypt is troubled about the Security Council's continuing encroachment on the functions and prerogatives of the Assembly and other United Nations bodies, and about attempts to expand the Council's mandate by introducing issues that, according to the Charter, come under the core prerogatives of other bodies. We are also concerned about the fact that there are some who insist on using our shared goal of promoting human rights as a back door for interfering in the internal affairs of States and adding items that do not constitute a threat to international peace and security to the Council's agenda.

That does not mean that Egypt denies the intrinsic links between the three main pillars of the work of the United Nations, indeed, our belief in them is as strong as ever. However, finding ways to deal with the profound challenges of today's world while achieving the goal of promoting and protecting human rights requires a comprehensive approach based on genuine and constructive dialogue, international cooperation and the exchange of experiences and best practices. In that regard, we believe that the mechanisms and capacities of the Human Rights Council, especially the Universal Periodic Review, make it the best forum for States to engage in such constructive dialogue.

At this time of critical junctures of international challenges, we must work to strengthen the role of the United Nations in settling conflicts and building bridges to understanding and cooperation among nations, so that it is a melting pot of coexistence and mutual respect among different cultures. We believe that by using the relevant mechanisms, and without prejudice to the purposes and principles of the Charter, the United Nations can play its part in promoting tolerance and respect for diversity, while avoiding any politicization, bias, lack of objectivity, double standards or exploitation of the noble principles of human rights as a tool for selective targeting and narrow political interests. We therefore urge that all human rights issues be addressed equitably and fairly and in accordance with the relevant frameworks, so as to maintain the credibility of the United Nations.

In conclusion, the problems of our times — including polarization, decade-long conflicts, the spread of terrorism, mass refugee crises and illegal migration — are all the result of double standards, violations of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and false interpretations of them that serve only narrow self-interests. We wish to distance ourselves from any attempt to implicate the Security Council in fomenting that polarization, which could only undermine its mandate under the Charter.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I would like to begin by thanking you, Madam President, for convening today's meeting. Human rights are universal. As Governments, we are all obliged to promote and protect them. As former Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson often said — and I apologize for repeating something that we have all heard so many times —

> "There is no peace without development, no development without peace and neither peace nor development without respect for human rights".

As a tribute to him and a reminder to all of us, it is sometimes useful to go back to the preamble of this fantastic, inspiring book. Our founders were "determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". We repeat that here very often, but let us not forget that the text goes on

> "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and ... to promote social progress and better standards of life in large freedom".

I could end there, but I do have a few more things to say.

First, the Human Rights Council is — as has been said here today — at the heart of the United Nations human rights architecture and deserves our full engagement. But human rights are also at the core of the Security Council's work. We see that in our discussions almost every day. Human rights have always played a role in its work. However, we should give greater attention and consideration to how they can be further integrated. The inherent link between the protection and promotion of human rights and the maintenance of international peace and security is clear and embodied in the Charter. Violations and abuses of human rights — civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural — can be drivers of conflict. Conversely, the respect for and protection of human rights contribute to addressing the root causes and drivers of instability, thereby helping to prevent and resolve conflicts and sustain peace.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing. We fully support his commitment to human rights as an intrinsic part of the work of the United Nations across all its pillars. We fully agree that human rights are integral to successfully delivering on both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and resolution 2282 (2016). We are encouraged by the concrete measures that he has put in place that are aimed at strengthening the capacity of the system of the United Nations to detect and respond early to signs of looming crisis. In this regard, the Human Rights Up Front initiative is a useful example of an approach that cuts across the three pillars to deliver early and contextualized analysis focused on prevention.

The Security Council's approach to human rights has evolved over time. Over the past 10 years, we have seen a positive trend, with significant growth in human rights functions within peace operations. Human rights components are now central to almost all mandates of peace operations, which enhance their quality and effectiveness. That includes capacity-building for host nations and reporting to the Security Council. In February, Uruguay, Senegal and Sweden organized an Arria-formula meeting on human rights components in peace operations in order to learn from the experience to date and to discuss how to further strengthen this work.

Another positive development has been briefings from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on particular human rights situations. In addition, the Council has addressed human rights in relation to both thematic and country-specific concerns.

Improved cooperation with regional organizations, such as the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, has contributed and can further contribute to a greater emphasis on human rights within the Council, including in peace operations. These organizations have clear objectives on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, not least as part of efforts for preventing conflicts. However, even if these are positive trends, then it is clear that we still need to do better.

Human rights are relevant to the work of the Security Council across all three phases of the conflict cycle: before, during and after. We need to step up in all three phases.

First, the primary responsibility for protecting the human rights of their populations lies with States. A failure to do so erodes trust within society and increases fear, suspicion and exclusion, sowing the seeds of instability and conflict. Some of the recurring causes of armed conflict relate to land ownership, language rights and minority rights. Monitoring respect for all human rights — civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights — must be an integral part of prevention. Responding early to violations and abuses of human rights can effectively prevent conflicts before they become a threat to regional and international peace and security.

Secondly, during conflicts, respect for international law, including human rights law and international humanitarian law, must be upheld. The trend is unfortunately the complete opposite. The correlation between conflict and discrimination against women has been established, making upholding women's human rights a security concern. Monitoring and reporting of all human rights during conflicts are crucial, including for the protection of civilians, schools and hospitals.

Human rights components must be standard in all peace operations. The protection and promotion of human rights should be a whole-of-mission approach. The integration of human rights into all aspects of peace operations, as well as in reports by the Secretary-General, should be strengthened. Human rights mandates decided upon by the Security Council must be adequately and sustainably funded.

Finally, human rights are essential for consolidating peace when emerging from conflict. Building sustainable and peaceful societies requires a comprehensive approach that brings together peace and security, sustainable development, gender equality and human rights. Just as a lack of respect for human rights can be a spur to conflict, a comprehensive human rights framework that ensures that the rights of all individuals and communities within a society are recognized and respected is critical to building sustainable peace. The United Nations, including peacekeeping operations, should better support efforts to strengthen national capacities, including on the rule of law. Ending impunity is also of key importance for reconciliation. Cultural impunity is a terrible trend.

The importance of ensuring accountability for human rights abuses and violations is relevant in all three phases. The Security Council must do better. There are numerous examples of where grave human rights violations have occurred and where early action by the Security Council could have made a difference. The failure to act fails the victims and undermines the legitimacy of the Council. We must also not forget the important role played by the International Criminal Court in this regard.

The Human Rights Council is the main United Nations human rights body. We absolutely agree with that. That should continue to be the case, and the Human Rights Council needs to have our full support in delivering on its mandate. It is equally clear that human rights are a critical aspect of the Security Council's mandate to maintain international peace and security. These are mutually reinforcing structures.

The mechanisms and special procedures of the OHCHR and the Human Rights Council's are an

independent and reliable source of information that the Security Council should make better use of in its work by, inter alia, inviting them to regularly brief the Council on urgent human rights related matters — before, during and after conflicts. Early warning mechanisms and relevant and independent information from the ground is crucial in order for the Security Council to effectively assess, prevent and respond to conflicts.

Briefings by the Secretariat to the Council should always include human rights as part of broader conflict analysis, drawing on the whole of the United Nations system to support the Council's decision-making.

Speaking in Geneva earlier this year, the Secretary-General told the Human Rights Council that "perhaps the best prevention tool we have is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the treaties that derive from it". If we are to fully live up to our responsibility to prevent conflict and maintain peace, human rights must be at the core of our business. We must and we can do better.

Mr. Zagaynov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We too would like to thank the Secretary-General for his participation in today's discussion.

The promotion and protection of human rights, along with the maintenance of peace and security and development issues, are fundamental activities of the United Nations.My statement contains the same quote from the Charter of the United Nations that has just been cited by the Permanent Representative of Sweden. I am glad that our delegations consider it equally relevant today. However, I am not sure that the rest of my statement will coincide with the comments we have just heard.

Over the years, the Organization has developed and operated a vast toolkit for the protection and promotion of human rights. The Security Council has never been and is not now a part of that toolkit, and this must be borne in mind when the Security Council raises certain issues relating to human rights. During the entire period of the existence of the United Nations, the members of the Security Council have avoided including the topic of human rights protection in its agenda. That is not accidental.

Various aspects of the issue are indeed present in the work of the Council. They are periodically addressed during thematic or country discussions. However, the Security Council is not intended to fulfill the tasks of ensuring the observance of human rights and is not adapted to a substantive analysis of the situation in this sphere. It is an organ with unique powers to make decisions, including those providing for the use of force in situations that pose a threat to peace, a breach of peace or an act of aggression. Under this mandate, the Council cannot serve as a forum for discussions about human rights situations, wherever they may be.

No international human rights instrument provides for the imposition of any oversight or other functions by the Security Council in this field. We cannot agree with the assertion made in the concept note prepared for the meeting, according to which violations of human rights should be considered as an issue related to the primary responsibility of the Security Council for maintaining international peace and security, in accordance with the Charter.

The Council has only those powers with which member States endowed it. Seeking to go beyond those powers inevitably encroaches on the competence of States or other bodies of the United Nations system, each of which has its own tasks and role. The Security Council held meeting in August 2014 at which it adopted resolution 2171 (2014), on conflict prevention was adopted (see S/PV.7247). The permanent representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Churkin, commented on the discussion as follows:

> "Based on some of the proposals we have heard, one could conclude that many of the bodies and structures of the United Nations could be eliminated, with the exception of the Security Council" (*S/PV.7247, p. 20*).

It seems that such a conclusion would be relevant and applicable to today's meeting.

We share the fears of those who are concerned about the inclusion of human rights issues in the Security Council and how that inclusion might be an attempt, distorted through the lens of preventing risks to international peace and security, to acquire an instrument for exerting political and military pressure on other countries. The expansion of the human rights component within the Council will lead to further criticism. That criticism would be quite justified on the grounds of its going beyond its mandate, its politicization and the double standards in its work, which, in sum, undermines trust in the Security Council itself.

Conflict prevention is an important issue in the context of maintaining international peace and security. Indeed, without guaranteeing sustainable peace and security and successful conflict prevention, it is impossible to ensure respect for human rights. It is impossible to work effectively on the promotion and protection of such rights where blood is shed and civilians die. The prevention and settlement of armed conflict are the main prerequisites for correcting human rights situations, and not vice versa.

We do not share the approach of considering human rights violations as the main precondition for armed conflict or human rights protection as a key instrument for preventing them or as a panacea. Practice demonstrates otherwise. The goal of conflict prevention is completely contrary to interfering in the domestic affairs of countries and undermining their sovereignty, often under the pretext of protecting human rights. Such examples abound. In recent years, we have seen similar tragedies in Iraq, Libya and elsewhere. They result in serious crises, the destabilization of entire regions, a rise in terrorist threats and the creation of large areas of chaos and violence, where it is impossible to guarantee not only political and economic rights, but even the basic right to life.

The main responsibility for preventing armed conflicts and for promoting and protecting human rights lies with States. The goal of the United Nations is to foster cooperation that improves the international legal base and facilitates the establishment and development of the potential of State institutions, while respecting their sovereignty and the division of labour within the Organization itself. Our delegation supports the opinion that it is important to have goals for conflict prevention and for guaranteeing human rights. What we cannot accept, however, is the proposed interpretation of the link between them and far-reaching conclusions based on an artificial construct. In our opinion, the best contribution that the members of the Security Council could make to protect human rights is that of working effectively, in accordance with the Council's mandate to guarantee international peace and security.

In conclusion, as usual, I would like to make some comments on the statement made by the representative of Ukraine. It was a good confirmation of our message that attempts would inevitably be made to politicize the Council's debate on human rights and use it to achieve goals very different from the objectives of the discussion. It perpetuates the propaganda and information campaign against Russia and is aimed at implanting genuine hatred for everything Russia-related in Ukraine, and is a clear illustration of the practice of double standards.

The Government of Ukraine has been seriously criticized by United Nations structures — including the Monitoring Mission, which the representative of Ukraine mentioned — and by non-governmental organizations for blatantly violating human rights. The relevant reports cite illegal arrests, forced disappearances, the torture and inhumane treatment of prisoners and sexual violence towards them, some cases of the authorities and radical nationalists pressuring the judiciary, a lack of progress in investigating the tragedies in Odessa and other atrocious crimes, with Ukrainian authorities conniving with radical nationalist groups, further restrictions on freedom of expression, the exclusion of the Russian language — which is a native language for million of Ukrainians — from the media, and imposing a genuine economic blockade in the eatern regions of the country. The list goes on, but the Ukrainian delegation preferred to remain silent on those facts.

With regard to Crimea, I would like to assure the Council that, fortunately, in that Russian region people are living peaceably and any issues relating to armed conflict are not at all relevant to Crimea. Equally irrelevant are the insinuations that were made about some human rights issues on the peninsual since its reunification with Russia. As for the Crimean Tatars, for more than 20 years of its independence Ukraine has done nothing to improve their situation, despite numerous recommendations from international human rights mechanisms. It is only now that Kyiv has become an active advocate of their rights at the international level, trying to use that issue to advance its own political agenda.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): I would like to thank you, Mad. m President, for organizing today's briefing and for the flexibility shown to ensure that members of the Security Council agreed to proceed with today's debate.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

As our Swedish colleague stated earlier, from its inception the United Nations has reaffirmed faith in fundamental human rights and the dignity and worth of the human person. Accordingly, promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental

freedoms for all, without distinction, has been one of the purposes of the United Nations. That, among other important factors, is considered imperative for the creation of conditions of stability and well-being that are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations. It is also worth mentioning that, as was stated in the 2005 World Summit outcome, development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. The Summit outcome also stressed the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights, meaning economic, social and political and civil rights. It further states that all human rights must be treated in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis.

In that regard, there is no better embodiment of that refined notion of human rights than the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its motto of leaving no one behind. Therefore, there is no major disagreement on the importance of respect for human rights, conceived as in the foregoing, in fostering peace and stability. In the light of the evolution of the nature of conflicts, there is indeed a growing recognition that the promotion of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms contributes positively to reinforcing peace and stability, while their wanton disregard and violation leads to more instability and chaos. That is why the Council has been giving increasing attention to human rights issues in the context of addressing the challenges and threats to international peace and security.

As the concept note has rightly indicated, the Security Council has been receiving briefings on human rights issues as part of its consideration of country-specific situations and thematic issues, including the protection of civilians, human trafficking, children in armed conflict, women and peace and security, among others. A number of important decisions have resulted from those discussions, which continue to guide the work of the Council in terms of the linkages between human rights and peace and security.

Many peacekeeping and special political missions have also been mandated to monitor and report on human rights situations. That notwithstanding, it seems to us self-evident that the protection and the promotion of human rights do not fall within the purview of the Security Council. In other words, the Council considers them only insofar as they relate to its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The primary organ within the United Nations system responsible for strengthening the promotion and the protection of human rights, addressing situations of human rights violations and promoting the effective coordination and mainstreaming of human rights within the United Nations system is indeed the Human Rights Council.

Human rights issues also constitute an important part of the work of the Third Committee of the General Assembly, which among others examines human rights questions, including reports of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council and adopts numerous draft resolutions submitted under the human rights agenda item during its annual session. Therefore, we believe that the Security Council should remain focused on carrying out its mandated responsibilities, as outlined in the Charter of the United Nations and not encroach on the powers and functions of other organs of the United Nations. Replicating the work of these organs will not only be inconsistent with the principles of the Charter, but will also create unnecessary division and discord. At a time when the Council is not able even to find common ground in addressing the most pressing issues of international peace and security, that will further undermine its ability to effectively carry out its primary responsibility.

Of course, we cannot ignore the need for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the Human Rights Council and other United Nations human rights mechanisms in carrying out their mandates, but the responsibility for that falls within the mandate of other principal organs of the United Nations, most of all the General Assembly. Needless to say, the discussions on human rights issues have always tended to be ideological, and their susceptibility to politicization and the lack of the consistency and coherence in dealing with human rights situations makes it extremely difficult to build the necessary consensus within the wider membership of the United Nations. But the solution is not to replace the functions of those other organs and mechanisms, but to improve and strengthen them so that they can effectively deliver on their mandated responsibilities.

However, that does not mean that the Security Council should remain indifferent to grave instances of human rights violations and crimes against humanity. The Council should be able to use all of the wide range of tools at its disposal to respond in a timely and effective manner to situations that endanger the maintenance of international peace and security. Unfortunately, the track record of the Security Council in that regard is far

from reassuring, and that has been the subject of much political and academic debate for quite some time. It is undoubtedly overdue for the Council to start being more self-critical.

In terms of the way forward, the Security Council would best be served in dealing with human rights situations by enhancing its constructive and complementary relations with other principal bodies of the United Nations and by taking advantage of their tools and expertise. But, as so clearly indicated in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1), the general principle to be adhered to is the need for all to work within their respective mandates, and the role of the Secretary-General should also not be overlooked. He may draw the attention of the Security Council to massive and systematic human rights abuses on the basis of his sole analysis and assessment of specific human rights situations, but with full awareness of the need to respect the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of States, as well as the principles of international law governing inter-State relations.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): We welcome to the Security Council today the Secretary-General, whose presence today is as important as it is appreciated.

Human rights violations that stir up hatred are the direct cause of tensions and violence, sometimes to the point of destabilizing entire countries and regions. That is why the Security Council has already developed measures to prevent abuses and protect human rights within the framework of its mandate as the guarantor of international peace and security. Today's important debate, for which I thank the American presidency, offers us a welcome opportunity to reflect on how to strengthen the Council's action as early as possible in crises but also during conflicts, so as to prevent, protect and sanction, which are essential tools for preserving, restoring and sustaining peace.

The link between human rights and the maintenance of international peace and security is clear, and the Security Council experiences that fact on a daily basis. In Syria, six years ago, it all began with the outrageous violation of the dignity and freedom of young adolescents in the town of Dar'a. Those massive violations of human rights by Bashar Al-Assad — violations of the freedoms to demonstrate and peacefully assemble, as well as torture and enforced disappearances — have led to the conflict that we see today, one that is destabilizing the entire region. Bashar Al-Assad continues to be guilty of serious crimes by reasoning erroneously that he will be able, through total repression, to put an end to a situation that he himself created. Our responsibility is to put an end to the headlong rush forward that confronts us. France has long acted to enable the Security Council to assume human rights responsibilities in order to maintain international peace and security. In that regard, the Security Council has been constantly innovating on at least four levels.

First, the Council has adopted mandates for peacekeeping operations and special political missions that enable them to document violations and assist the authorities in the areas of the rule of law, security and justice, in particular in Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic. Peacekeeping operations must continue to have the means to fully and effectively implement those mandates. They have a duty to serve as an example. In that regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's stepped-up efforts, in particular his zero-tolerance policy with respect to sexual abuse. The Security Council has also used its sanctions regimes to list individuals responsible for violating human rights, as is the case, for example, with respect to the Democratic Republic of Congo. That aspect needs to be strengthened.

Secondly, the Council has established specific mechanisms for children's rights and women's rights. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the Security Council Working Group on the subject have made considerable progress over the past 15 years, including in situations that were not on the Council's agenda. France has always been a leader in that field and has been at the forefront of the international community's efforts, which my country remobilized on 21 February 2017 with the adoption of the Paris Principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights. We thank Sweden for chairing the Working Group. We pay tribute to Leila Zerrougui and have no doubt that Virginia Gamba will carry out her mission with as much conviction and efficiency as her predecessor. Considerable progress has been made in the protection and participation of women since resolution 1325 (2000). The women and peace and security agenda can still — and still needs to — move forward.

Thirdly, the Council has played its part in the fight against impunity, which must be eliminated in

order to ensure lasting peace. It supported the creation of the Special Criminal Court in the Central African Republic, which enables Central Africans to assume their responsibilities. In a complementary way, when nothing can be done at the national level, the Rome Statute provides for the possibility of the Security Council making referrals to the International Criminal Court (ICC). In the case of Syria, as we know, France's proposal to seize the ICC with that issue came up against the veto. We cannot agree to leave it at that. Recent experience has shown that the right to veto cannot be an unconditional privilege, if our Council is to be able to fulfil its responsibilities fully, especially in the face of mass crimes. That is the meaning of the initiative launched by France and Mexico on limiting the use of the veto. Some 99 States support the initiative today, and the movement continues. Finally, the Council has established a useful dialogue with human rights bodies in various formats. Our exchanges could be more frequent.

In order to allow the Security Council to play a more effective role, France proposes to work on several tracks. The first track is to have the briefings of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General integrate more systematically and more comprehensively information on human rights situations gathered by the peacekeeping operations and the teams of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The second track is for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to speak as often as necessary in the Security Council on human rights violations that could be warning signs, the causes of conflict or factors aggravating an already evident crisis. That is imperative with respect to Burundi, where the calls for violence and the cases of torture and rape relayed this morning by the High Commissioner are of deep concern to us.

The third track is the search for more synergy with the Human Rights Council, a body to which France is very attached. The Security Council should not be sealed off from the work of the Human Rights Council, which the General Assembly has made the principal United Nations organ for protecting those rights. Special procedures such as the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic must have formal access to the Security Council in order to alert us and advise us as to our actions.

Finally, the Security Council's field visits must serve as an opportunity for it to establish systematic contacts with civil society and human rights defenders. The Security Council devoted an important share of its latest visit to the Lake Chad Basin to that endeavour.

The protection of human rights is part and parcel of the responsibilities of the Security Council in the peaceful settlement of disputes and in responding to a threat against peace or a breach of the peace. In failing to protect human rights at all stages of a conflict, the Security Council cannot effectively fulfil its mandate to maintain international peace and security. That is an essential component of both its effectiveness and its legitimacy. Indeed, that shows how obvious are the links between international peace and security, on the one hand, and human rights violations, on the other, and how timely is the thematic meeting that we are holding today.

In the same vein, the Council must be able to address humanitarian challenges when they are consequent to or fuel conflicts. Accordingly, France is very concerned about the resurgence of famine situations in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen. We would like to see the Security Council consider that topic, and we propose as a first step that an Arria Formula meeting be held during the next several weeks.

Human rights are our best guide in our efforts to ensure lasting peace and international security. The initiative of the Secretary-General for lasting peace and the deliberations underway on peacekeeping are convergent. We must continue that effort within the Security Council so as to strengthen crisis prevention and lasting peace.

Let us therefore meet that challenge together.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The Senegalese delegation welcomes the convening of this meeting by the United States presidency to discuss human rights and the prevention of conflicts. The Senegalese delegation would also like express its appreciation for the opportunity to hear the statement by Secretary-General António Guterres, whose commitment to the promotion and the protection of human rights needs no introduction, as was shown by his very informative briefing.

The Senegalese delegation fully agrees with the three essential points that the Secretary-General made earlier. Your initiative, Madam, has enabled us to

relaunch this fascinating and often impassioned debate, which has hardly been exhausted, among members of the Security Council on the links, tenuous though they may appear, between human rights and peace and security, as well as on the role that the Security Council can and must play in ensuring the respect of human rights through prevention when necessary. It is therefore fortunate that you have included this thematic debate under an existing and important agenda item of the Security Council, namely, the maintenance of international peace and security in its connection with human rights and the prevention of conflicts.

My delegation hopes that our discussions today will result, if not in a consensus, at least in a clearer idea and shared vision with regard to the existing links between security, peace and human rights, as well as the role that the various organs of the United Nations system must play through complementarity and synergy, the respective prerogatives and mandates of which have been made clearly identifiable in the Charter of the United Nations and United Nations practices in response to the unfortunate development of threats and conflicts. That has become all the more possible since, as human rights issues have been addressed for the past 25 years, the role of the Council in examining those issues as they relate to international peace and security has become more clear, particularly within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the recommendations in the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see S/2015/446), and resolution 2282 (2016) on the international peacebuilding architecture, security and peacebuilding, in particular through the Peacebuilding Commission.

It is in such a spirit that my country, Senegal, approaches today's meeting, bearing in mind the premise that human rights are one of the three pillars of United Nations activities and are mentioned seven times in the Charter. But it is clear that we must respect the mandates of each organ with regard to human rights, in particular those of the General Assembly and its Human Rights Council and those of the many committees, without, of course, forgetting the role of the Secretary-General through his various Special Representatives on thematic issues, including those relating to children and armed conflict, women and peace and security, and the prevention of genocide.

I can also cite the United Nations Development Group's human rights mainstreaming mechanism with its credo "Human Rights Up Front". There are also the 16 peacekeeping operations, of which 10 include a human rights element that is more or less well structured. But all of that would be ineffective, if each of the bodies were to work in an isolated manner at a time when everyone agrees that we need more synergies and complementarity, as expressed in the title of the "One United Nations" initiative. In that regard, we anxiously await the decisions of the Secretary-General concerning the reorganization of the Secretariat.

We note another caveat concerning respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States while working towards the promotion and protection of human rights.

Given all of those functional prerogatives, the tragic turn of many internal conflicts in several areas of the world has led the Council in the distant and recent past to act when such situations characterized by massive human rights violations have threatened international peace and security, because they risk resulting in massive refugee flows towards international borders and consequent border violations.

We recall the terrible events that led, for example — and there are many other examples — to the adoption of resolution 688 (1991) on the question of the Iraqi Kurds and resolution 693 (1991), which established the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador with an ambitious human rights mandate, including monitoring, the monitoring, promotion and investigation of human rights violations. In the same year, the provisions of Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter were not violated when the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights was invited to participate in the Council's deliberations. Since then, according to statistics, the Council has hosted 15 such briefings.

Many other resolutions have resulted from discussions on human rights in the Council, such as those concerning South Sudan and the Central African Republic, as well as those concerning Liberia and Sierra Leone. I am charting out this history to remind members that the issue is not a new one and that it has given rise in the past to edifying examples of cooperation between various bodies of the United Nations on more than one occasion, situations in which the Human Rights Council, for example, established a commission of inquiry and transmitted its findings to the General Assembly, which, in turn, adopted a

resolution recommending that the Security Council follow the advice of the commission of inquiry. That seems to us to be the kind of cooperation that should be encouraged, in the spirit of one United Nations.

I would also like to welcome the definition and granting by the Council of mandates for human rights protection in 10 of the 16 peacekeeping operations as well as in five special political missions, which demonstrates its resolve to contribute to respect for and the effectiveness of these rights, in particular in times of conflict.

Thus, aware of the gravity of the issue of human rights protection in armed conflict, the Council has incorporated the rights of women and children into its work by applying to peacekeeping the concepts of gender equality and of the preservation of the best interests of the child. These various mechanisms are complemented by that of sanctions, and one criterion for sanctions designation is human rights violations. The Council will also recall the various reports submitted to the Security Council containing recommendations aimed at strengthening human rights protection, which include the one I mentioned earlier.

Let us make no mistake: these gains, remarkable though they may be, are still fragile and must be carefully safeguarded from the ever-increasing threats and challenges we currently face. Indeed, the current juncture demands that on a daily basis we consider the links between crises, armed conflicts and human rights violations. But even beyond such conflicts and violations, we must also address the issues of poverty, food insecurity, health crises, environmental problems and climate change, which pose equally significant threats to peace and security. It is therefore vital to take into account all human rights, be they civil, political, economic, social or cultural, so as to ensure an effective international peace and security.

It is for that reason that the Council, in addition to underlining in its decisions that the three pillars of the Organization — peace and security, human rights and development — are inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing.

Concerning the increasing number of major human rights violations, especially in conflict situations, by both State and non-State actors — including, unfortunately, extremist and terrorist groups — we must work together in a concerted manner and with greater resolve to put an end to such acts. It is therefore important that, as independent and sovereign Member States, we invest sufficiently in all of these different issues, including the human rights issue, on the basis of mutual respect and a constructive dialogue.

While one of the main objectives of United Nations peacekeeping missions is to put an end to conflicts, it is also vital, in our view, to prevent crises and build peace and development on a solid foundation. That is why my country, Senegal, would like to reiterate its plea for better prevention based on robust, reliable alert systems and the necessary open cooperation between all stakeholders, in particular within subregional and regional organizations such as the African Union, which has its own African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which has a Protocol on good governance, the rule of law and electoral processes. We would also like to underscore the commitment of ECOWAS, which on a number of occasions has worked together with the United Nations and demonstrated its proactivity through good offices, as was the case with the resolution of the crisis in Burkina Faso, or through preventive deployment, such as in Liberia in 1990 and Sierra Leone in 1997, and, more recently, in the Gambia.

Furthermore, United Nations human rights mechanisms that monitor and report on human rights, including the Human Rights Council, with its Universal Periodic Review and organs created under international instruments, form a basis that is useful, despite needing some fine-tuning, for addressing human rights issues.

Therefore, the Human Rights Council could, through the General Assembly if necessary, draw the attention of the Security Council to situations that may lead to conflict. Bearing in mind the importance of the post-conflict phase in crisis recurrence, it seems to us wise to take into account the promotion and protection of human rights in efforts at peacebuilding and bringing about a sustainable peace. My delegation therefore believes that high priority should be accorded to the right to development, given the various principles involved, which include equality, non-discrimination, participation, transparency and responsibility, as well as cooperation, in particular at the international level.

Finally, human rights protection can also serve as a confidence-building measure among parties to a conflict involved in negotiations on the conclusion of agreements, either peace agreements or cessation-of-

hostilities agreements. This is a clear reflection of their relevance in terms of defining political strategies.

Human rights is a cross-cutting issue that runs through the whole of the United Nations system, including in the work of the Security Council. Thus Senegal is of the view that we need to create conditions for a stronger international cooperation on human rights that is effective in times of conflict and times of peace and would make better, synergetic use of the many relevant mechanisms, in the framework of an approach that combines universality, interdependence, impartiality and objectivity.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I wish to thank you, Madam President, for having called this important debate. I welcome the clear Security Council support for discussing this issue. I also thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and strongly agree with all of it.

The United Kingdom is committed to the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide, not just because it is the right thing to do, but also because it is a cornerstone of peace, stability and security and a tool for conflict prevention. The Security Council has a clear role to play. This is necessary in order for us to do the job that the United Nations Charter gave us. It is absolutely not encroachment, for the reasons the Secretary-General so eloquently set out.

Too often, after a conflict, the international community looks back and concludes that more should have been done at the outset and that warning signs had not been acted upon. All too often those warning signs involve human rights violations and abuses.

Twenty-five years ago, the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions reported on allegations of killings in Rwanda. A year later, his successor visited Rwanda and later warned the Commission on Human Rights of his fears of potential genocide. We all know now the consequences of the international community not responding decisively to those concerns.

Today the international community is being asked the same questions and given similar warnings in South Sudan. We need to come up with better answers.

The situation in Syria also shows the clear connection between human rights violations and conflict. A regime faced in 2011 by peaceful protests from its people responded not with reform but with repression and violence. We have seen where this has led: a civil war, a huge rise in violent extremism, death and forced disappearances, a refugee crisis, regional instability and even the use of chemical weapons against civilians.

The story of Masri, a Syrian man is, sadly, just one example. He was arrested after participating in a peaceful protest at the start of the conflict. He was tortured, starved and interrogated over two years in four detention facilities and then taken to a regime hospital that has been described as a slaughterhouse. A rare survivor, he was taken back to the notorious Sednaya prison for another year of torture. He was eventually released, but when he returned home, he screamed at his own reflection in the mirror: he had not recognized himself — a ghostly skeleton of a human standing where he had once stood. That is an illustration of why repeated abuses of the veto in the Council, to block accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses in Syria, are so damaging. They reinforce the Syrian regime's certainty that it can get away with carrying out gross violations of human rights with impunity.

The United Kingdom will continue to do its utmost to hold accountable the perpetrators of all such violations and abuses. That is why the United Kingdom also welcomes the Secretary-General's continued focus on prevention. That includes his support for his predecessor's Human Rights Up Front initiative, which seeks to bring the United Nations system together, prioritizes human rights and promotes joint work on cross-cutting issues. It also seeks to ensure that the United Nations does all it can, not just to respond to, but to prevent serious violations or abuses of human rights. We have seen time and time again how detrimental those are to peace and security.

Two institutions of the United Nations are particularly vital to delivering this joined-up approach to human rights. First, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and his Office provide invaluable support to United Nations peacekeeping operations. They advise on mandates. They carry out strategic assessment missions to South Sudan, Liberia and Mali. They send technical and operational support missions to Iraq and Kosovo, to name just a few from the last year. We welcome the interaction between the Council and the High Commissioner and his Office.

The second is the Human Rights Council. Like many others, we are concerned when countries with

poor human rights records get on to the Human Rights Council. Nevertheless, the Human Rights Council plays a central role in responding to human rights violations that pose imminent threats to peace and security. Every country, including the worst offenders, has a Universal Periodic Review. Each has to explain policies and actions. The United Kingdom particularly values the role the Human Rights Council plays in overseeing the Special Rapporteurs and other investigative mechanisms, such as commissions of inquiry. Crucially, for the work of the Council, these vital tools help provide objective and professionally gathered information on how potential or active conflicts are evolving.

Human rights are intertwined with so much of what the Council does. The United Kingdom welcomes this debate. The Council cannot fully discharge its responsibility, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, to maintain international peace and security without addressing human rights every single day.

Mr. Lambertini (Italy): I thank you, Madam President, for organizing this very timely debate. It is difficult to believe that this is the first time the Council is discussing human rights outside of the context of a specific human rights situation or peacekeeping operation. However, there is always a first time for everything in life.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

Today's meeting actually fits perfectly with our holistic vision of security, in which peace, sustainable development and the respect for human rights reinforce one another. That is also consistent with the growing attention the Council devotes to human rights with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security. There are different opinions as to whether human rights falls within the scope of Council action. While fully respecting the different mandates of relevant United Nations bodies, it is hard to deny the crucial relevance of human rights in daily conflict prevention, conflict management and post-conflict scenarios.

With respect to prevention, human rights abuses are often the most effective warning sign of instability, especially when they escalate into atrocity crimes. Many examples have already been highlighted by my colleague in the Council. I would just like to raise an example. The global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) demonstrated that increasing levels of domestic violence and the vulnerability of women to gender-based violence, within and outside the home, often reflected growing tensions and militarization in a society. Such issues can be a valuable indicator and source of information if used as part of an early warning mechanism for preventive action.

Turning to conflict management, human rights violations are often among the root causes of conflict and almost invariably constitute one of its most prominent aspects. That is particularly true today, with non-State armed groups resorting to gross human rights violations in war. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and its affiliates, for instance, are using sexual violence as a terrorist tactic to advance their strategic and ideological objectives. That is why the Council is recognizing the victims of sexual violence as victims of terrorism. Children are increasingly employed as soldiers. For that reason, the Council has the Working Group on Children in Armed Conflict.

During Italy's previous term in the Security Council in 2008, the Council adopted resolution 1820 (2008), which was the first to recognize the connection between international security and sexual violence. Today, we should look into the trafficking of human beings, as well as trafficking in and the destruction of cultural heritage as ways to undermine the fundamental rights of individuals and communities with respect to long-term conflict and instability.

With regard to post-conflict situations, the Security Council has often been mindful of human rights violations when articulating its response, deciding peacekeeping operations mandates or adopting sanctions. Against that backdrop, notwithstanding the primary responsibility of States to respect human rights, we believe that the Council has a role to play, in synergy with United Nations bodies tasked with the monitoring of human rights, in particular the Human Rights Council. In that regard, allow me to make some operational suggestions.

First, prevention requires information. The Security Council should, together with the Human Rights Council and other involved actors, devise a more systematic use of human rights-related information as an early-warning mechanism and a crucial element in sustainable, long-term armed-conflict prevention efforts. Only when the issue becomes second nature can we be equipped to effectively prevent and tackle crisis situations. We support the Human Rights Up Front initiative, which aimed to establish a change in

mind set, to mainstream human rights in all our work, including that of the Security Council, as well as in the Framework of Analysis, which aims to assess the risk of crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and ethnic cleansing, from an early-warning perspective.

We therefore believe that information provided to the Council by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, is extremely useful to better tackle crises we already follow and to obtain meaningful insight into countries that are not on the agenda of the Security Council. Since situations may deteriorate and escalate into violence, they should brief the Council on a more regular basis. Like other countries, Italy has joined the declaration on the reinforcement of cooperation between the Security Council and the Human Rights Council. It is one of the objectives for our candidature to the Human Rights Council for the 2019-2021 term. For instance, we would welcome regular briefings by the President of the Human Rights Council to the Security Council.

Two other informative tools at the disposal of the Council are visiting missions and the Arria formula. Visiting missions should include a human rights focus, as was the case last March when the mission to the Lake Chad basin monitored the human rights situation of displaced people, women, children, and victims of sexual violence. I was there and was truly affected by what I witnessed. That formula provides the Council with additional information and interaction with civil society. We look forward to the meeting with the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic to be held this Friday.

Turning now to the second operational measure, when reacting to conflict the Security Council should provide peacekeeping operations with a strong human-rights mandate. As is often the case, sanctions or other tools are used to address persistent patterns of human rights violations. We support the inclusion of sexual violence as a separate criterion for sanctions in the most recent renewal of sanctions in the Central African Republic. A more systematic use of sanctions, rather than a case-by-case basis, against individuals that have committed gross human rights violations could be also a strong deterrent in preventing new atrocities.

Lastly, with regard to accountability for the most serious crimes, this kind of action may seem to come too late after conflicts erupt and large-scale crimes are committed. However, if the Council acts consistently in bringing perpetrators to justice, justice itself can become a relevant and decisive tool for preventing human rights violations. Useful examples of such an approach can be found in the International Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, established by the Council, and of course in the work of the International Criminal Court. Accountability for the crimes committed in Syria should be established and their perpetrators brought to justice. We understand that at times Member States feel that such efforts are a form of interference and undermine national sovereignty. But what really threatens State sovereignty is violence and conflict, and the Council also has to help Member States to prevent them from recurring.

In conclusion, is there any situation on the agenda of the Security Council that does not include serious violations of human rights? The Council has a wide array of tools at its disposal for maintaining peace and security and preventing and responding to gross human rights violations, including the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, and the French-Mexican initiative on restraint in the use of the veto. Ultimately, the Security Council's unity is the crucial factor in achieving its core objective, the protection of civilians.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to join my colleagues in thanking the Secretary-General for his enlightening briefing today and, of course, affirming our full support to him in his efforts regarding the prevention of conflict.

As I was listening to my colleagues I found myself envisioning the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, an international document that has become vital to respect for human dignity, emphasizing the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and progressivity of human rights as an essential part of international law. Development, peace and human rights, as we have seen, are also closely linked and interdependent. Since the promulgation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the international community has agreed on a number of international norms — such as the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights — and we have gone even further than

that, recognizing collective rights such as the right to peace and to development, which are not spoken of as much as they once were, and the right to a healthy, clean environment.

Today, human rights represent one of the fundamental pillars in the multilateral arena in which we work. Clearly, a number of situations that the Security Council has to address are connected to it, owing to its cross-cutting nature. And that is the case with the various peacekeeping operations and special political missions whose mandates include human rights issues. We consider it crucial to ensure that civilian, police and military personnel all act within a framework of absolute respect for human rights and for the local population, as well as any third parties involved. We should also emphasize the importance of those missions for promoting, evaluating, monitoring and protecting human rights. We therefore firmly condemn any form of sexual abuse, commercial sexual exploitation or other activity that violates the dignity and freedom of the people in areas where United Nations military, police or civilian personnel are deployed.

Every mission has its own particularities. It is important to analyse them on a case-by-case basis in order to decide whether it is relevant to include human rights issues in their mandates. The approach in that regard will depend on the various contexts affecting each individual situation, which means that there is no single formula that applies to all missions.

While human rights cut across the issues we address, it is important to remember that the Charter of the United Nations gives the Security Council primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. It is not supposed to concern itself with generally promoting the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. In that regard, the General Assembly, in its resolution 60/251 of 3 April 2006, reaffirmed the universality and indivisibility of human rights and created the Human Rights Council as the principal United Nations entity responsible for promoting universal respect for their protection. The resolution also recognized the importance of ensuring universality, objectivity and non-discrimination in considering human rights issues, of eliminating double standards and avoiding politicization.

The Human Rights Council also serves as a forum for dialogue on all human rights issues and is the main arena for dealing with human rights violations, including serious and systematic ones. We would like to highlight the Universal Periodic Review process, which so far is the only universal mechanism enabling every country to inform the international community about its fulfilment of its human rights obligations and commitments within a framework of objectivity and access to reliable information, under the auspices of the Human Rights Council.

The Plurinational State of Bolivia affirms the views of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, which brings together 120 States Members of our Organization — almost two-thirds of the membership — as expressed in a recently issued communiqué that outlines the Movement's position taken at its latest Summit. I will read out some paragraphs in English, the language that it was originally issued in. The group of the Heads of State of the Non-Aligned Movement

(*spoke in English*)

> "[r]eiterates its concern over the continuing encroachment by the Security Council on the functions and powers of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council through addressing issues which traditionally fall within the competence of the latter organs, and the attempts to enter areas of norm-setting, administrative and budgetary matters and establishing definitions which fall within the purview of the Assembly; further expresses concern over the constant attempts by the Security Council to use some thematic issues under its consideration, including those related to human rights, to expand its mandate into areas which do not pose a threat to international peace and security and further urges the Council to confine to its mandate in accordance with the charter provisions;
>
> "Reaffirms its commitment to the promotion and protection of all human rights without discrimination and underlines that democracy, sustainable development and the respect of all human rights, civil and political; economic, social and cultural rights, in their universal, indivisible and interdependent character, including the right to development, are all closely related and mutually reinforcing;
>
> "Reaffirms that democracy, development and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually

reinforcing, and that the international community should support the strengthening and promotion of democracy, development and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the entire world, without distinction between developed and developing countries, in compliance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter;

"Opposes and stops ongoing attempts to shift issues under the agenda of the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council to the Security Council, and the encroachment by the latter on the functions and powers of the Assembly;

"Reaffirms that all organs and bodies of the United Nations should carry out only those tasks which are established in their respective mandates; in that regard, it reiterates that the principal United Nations organs have distinct and separate roles in accordance with the United Nations Charter;

"Opposes the ongoing practice by the Security Council of dealing with human rights issues which do not pose a threat to international peace and security and calls on the Security Council to respect its mandate as outlined in the United Nations Charter;

"Rejects the use of the Security Council as a tool to pursue national political interests and agendas, aggravating rather than alleviating situations contrary to its mission as enshrined in the Charter, and stresses the necessity of non-selectivity, impartiality and accountability in the work of the Council, and the need for the Council to strictly keep within the powers and functions accorded to it by the Member States under the United Nations Charter;

"Rejects the ongoing practice of the Security Council of dealing with human rights issues in pursuit of certain States' political objectives."

(*spoke in Spanish*)

That is the end of the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

It is not that we do not want to discuss the topic of human rights. Rather, we want to discuss it in a forum in which the membership agrees on the topic. We want a much more democratic and transparent forum than the Security Council. I understand that some permanent members of the Security Council insist on examining the topic in this Council because they have been here over the past decades and they will remain here for a long time. However, that is not the case for the two-thirds of the Organization's membership represented in the Non-Aligned Movement.

I would like to cite the example of a NAM press release and its contents. It seeks to avoid the politicization of certain topics. For example, the General Assembly has adopted tens of resolutions callign for an end to the economic, financial and trade embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba, stating that the embargo causes suffering in the Cuban population and that it limits the exercise of certain rights. However, I think that in the area of human rights, Cuba has made great strides in the promotion of certain rights. The fact that the issue is politicized and that some countries are singled out on the issue makes it impossible to have a frank discussion on the topic.

Bolivia has signed almost all international standards of human rights. It is signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Rome Statute. In addition, Bolivia has also invited the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to actively work in the country and monitor activities and the status of human rights in Bolivia.

I ask the Council: How many countries have ratified that many human rights instruments? How many have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child? How many have ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights? How many have ratified the Rome Statute? We believe that one way to guarantee the exercise of human rights is to join together in ratifying such instruments in order to ensure their universality.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I wish to thank Secretary-General Guterres for his briefing today.

Conflict prevention and resolution are the sacred responsibility entrusted to the Security Council by the Charter of the United Nations. Given the new developments in the international context, causes of conflicts across the world are becoming more complex and diverse, with different, intertwined factors. As a

result, the ideas and means for conflict resolution must also evolve in order to be systematic, comprehensive and targeted. I wish to make the following observations.

First, efforts should be focused on building a more favourable international environment for conflict prevention. The target for conflict prevention is to build a world with universal security. However, the security of individual countries is interdependent. No nation can seek absolute security on its own and no country can harvest stability from turmoil in other countries. All nations must establish the concept of a common, shared future and advocate for a global governance concept based on the principle of engaging wider consultation, making joint contributions and shared benefits in order to build a global partnership based on dialogue and partnership rather than confrontation and alliances. We need to insist on common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security and carry it throughout the entire process of conflict prevention in order to build a favourable global environment for conflict prevention. It is necessary to coordinate and maintain security in conventional and non-conventional fields. We must advance sustainable security with sustainable development in order to eliminate the root causes of conflicts.

Secondly, we feel that disputes among countries need to be addressed appropriately through dialogue and consultation. All countries need to abide by the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and follow the basic norms governing international relations, such as respect for the principles of sovereignty and the territorial integrity of nations, non-aggression and peaceful settlement of disputes. It is important to insist on good-neighbourly relations, advocate inclusiveness and cooperation and effectively manage differences and conflicts in order to resolve disputes through peaceful means, such as dialogue and consultation. The goal of conflict prevention is to realize peace. Any non-peaceful means are undesirable.

Thirdly, we are committed to addressing the root causes of conflicts. Conflicts have many deep root causes, such as extreme poverty, unbalanced development, shortage of resources and ethnic and tribal conflicts. Conflict prevention needs to take into account the root causes of conflict. All countries should make development their top priority and jointly forge ahead with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in order to realize the goal of eliminating poverty from the world at an early date and build capacities for autonomous development in order to provide impetus for conflict prevention.

The international community should fully respect the wills of the countries involved and resolve conflicts, with the countries involved taking the lead. The international community should provide constructive assistance in the process of political and national reconciliation. We need to make greater efforts to promote civilizational and cultural exchanges that are diverse, harmonious, inclusive and all-embracing. We need to carry out dialogue and enhance mutual understanding in order to turn differences into driving forces for exchange and integration, rather than leave them as potential causes for conflict.

In areas plagued by armed conflicts, the threat of terrorism is especially acute. The international community should strengthen the unified global counter-terrorism front and prioritize counter-terrorism cooperation on the international security agenda. Special measures need to be taken in order to prevent the erosion of peoples' minds by the ideologies of terrorism and extremism, thereby eliminating breeding grounds for terrorism.

Fourthly, we need to give full responsibility to regional and subregional organizations, as they have geographical, historical and cultural advantages. They know the regional circumstances and specific causes of conflicts best. The international community should support regional and subregional organizations in capitalizing on their advantages in order to make greater contributions to conflict prevention in those regions.

In recent years, African regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union, have been committed to the joint self-development and improvement of African countries, and have actively carried out activities related to conflict prevention and pushed for African solutions to African issues. They have played a very active role in safeguarding peace and stability on the African continent. The United Nations should further strengthen its cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union, and provide more targeted assistance so as to allow them to play a greater and more unique role in dialogue, consultation, good offices and mediation to address the hotspot issues in Africa.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): I appreciate and commend the leadership of the United States in convening today's

meeting. I would also like to thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his impactful remarks.

The three pillars of the United Nations — peace and security, sustainable development and human rights — are not independent of each other. That is no less true with regard to the relationship between human rights and international peace and security. In fact, the Security Council has already been discussing and taking action on human rights in various regional situations, as well as on many cross-cutting issues. Therefore, we welcome the fact that the Security Council has rightly decided to have a briefing under this theme in order to foster a comprehensive discussion on the nexus between the two pillars.

The international community has seen many cases in the past, as in Rwanda and Bosnia, and today in Syria, where a dire human rights and humanitarian situation destabilizes the surrounding region. In too many cases, people face being abused or brutally killed because of their ethnicity or religious beliefs. The escalation of such attacks, retaliation and conflicts may even lead to war crimes or crimes against humanity.

We have also seen the case of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, where authorities pursue the development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles at the cost of the fundamental human needs and welfare of the people in its territory. In addition, with regard to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, its abduction of foreign nationals is a grave human rights violation. At the same time, it undermines the sovereignty of the countries concerned and threatens the lives and safety of their citizens.

Such deliberate human rights violations as a method to threaten international peace and security can also be seen in other places. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Boko Haram use human rights abuses — such as abduction, rape and human trafficking — as tactics of combat. Those examples remind us that the discussion of serious human rights violations falls within the mandate of the Security Council as long as they may affect international peace and security. Whether such a linkage exists in a particular case or not can also be discussed in the Council.

Discussions mean nothing unless they lead to a positive change towards a stabilized world in which each person's human rights are protected. In that regard, it is the obligation of the Security Council to make full use of the options that the Council possesses. Currently, more than half of the United Nations peacekeeping and political missions have human rights-related mandates. Since, regrettably, human rights abuses often occur in unstable contexts and they also become root causes of destabilization, certain situations compel us to integrate human rights components into peace operations.

The Security Council could also utilize various mechanisms outside the Council, especially those of the Human Rights Council, in order to acquire sufficient information for making appropriate decisions related to preventing and ending conflict and atrocity. With that in mind, Japan joined the appeal of 13 June 2016, entitled "To Put Human Rights at the Heart of Conflict Prevention", during the thirty-second session of the Human Rights Council, and we support the recommendation made therein to intensify the exchange between the two Councils.

Most of the conflicts that we are facing today are not classical wars between sovereign States. Most of them are asymmetrical conflicts driven by non-State actors. In such cases, the risk that civilians will become victims of atrocities and atrocious attacks is significantly higher than in inter-State wars. Today, we are also facing cases where systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations have become essential components of political systems and, though not comprising active conflicts, such systems pose serious threats to regional stability.

Under such circumstances, focusing on human rights aspects is essential to seeing the overall picture of a threat or conflict. It is the responsibility of the security Council to decide whether or not certain cases of human rights violations pose a threat to international peace and security, and, if so, to decide how the international community should respond.

The President: The representative of Ukraine has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Vitrenko (Ukraine): Once again, the Russian delegation referred to Crimea as if it were its own, in outright contravention of General Assembly resolution 68/262, thereby directly insulting at least 100 States Members of the United Nations that voted in its favour, as well as resolution 71/205, which was loud and clear in recognizing Russia as the occupying Power in Crimea.

Today, I listened carefully to the Russian representative and heard no intention whatsoever to cooperate with the United Nations Human Rights

Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. If the situation is as rosy as it is presented by the Russian delegation, why is the Russian Federation so afraid of allowing the Monitoring Mission to enter the peninsula? Today's assertions by the representative of the Russian Federation on the situation in Ukraine suggests that all States Members of the United Nations should carefully read all of the reports by the Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine that we mentioned in our statement. Read them in their entirety and do not resort to cherry-picking and manipulating them as the Russian Federation continues to do.

In conclusion, while rejecting each and every point made by the Russian delegation on Ukraine, I must still acknowledge that there is hardly any better illustration than the Russian delegation's intervention on how dramatically the Russian Federation departed from the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Perhaps, that is because it is one of the youngest Members of the United Nations and, unlike Ukraine, it did not draft the Charter.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.